

Keep a weather eye open

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Two thirds of British people have been caught out by severe weather, according to the latest research from the Met Office, despite regularly checking the weather forecast.

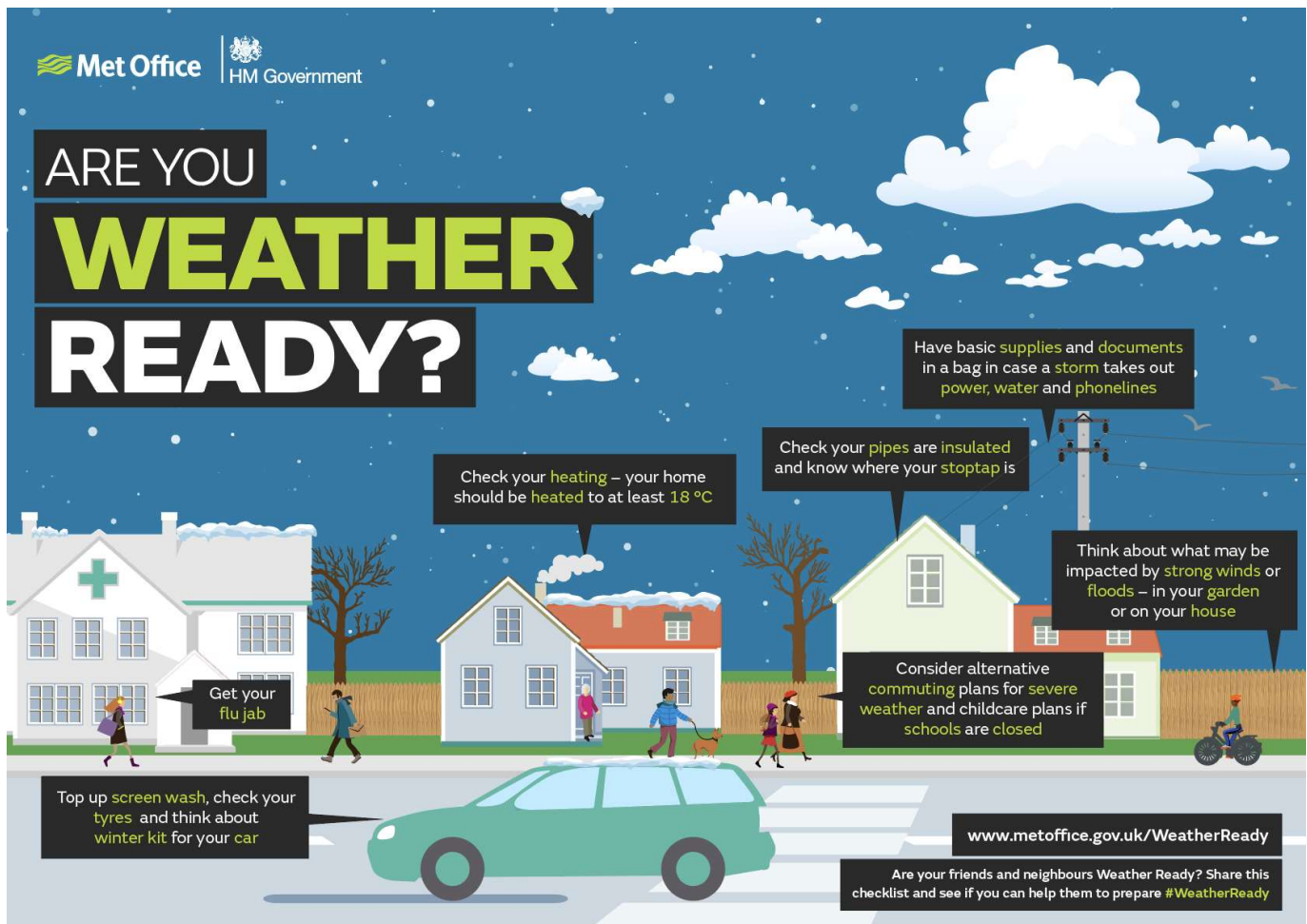
- Over two thirds (66 per cent) of Brits have been caught out by Winter weather leading to illness, missed work and cancelled social plans.
- 50 per cent say this is due to lack of preparation.
- The Met Office is helping people prepare with a WeatherReady check list via its website.

What are the consequences of not preparing for severe weather?

Half of those surveyed (50 per cent) say being caught out by the extreme weather was due to lack of preparation, resulting in illness (13 per cent) missing out on work (22 per cent) and cancelling social plans (20 per cent).

Whilst a third of us check the forecast to find out what to wear, the Met Office is urging everyone to think beyond day-to-day clothing choices and make sure vital checks are carried out on homes, vehicles and neighbours to avoid disruption from extreme weather.

A huge 74% of those surveyed don't think they are ready for winter, with 20 per cent admitting that they only start winter preparations, such as checking their boiler and pipes and stocking up their freezer, in December. This is despite the biggest cited disruption from bad weather being boilers breaking down and pipes bursting.



How can you prepare for Winter?

The Met Office WeatherReady initiative is about encouraging people to be prepared for and cope with extreme weather.

More severe winter weather in recent years, including heavy rainfall and snow, hasn't encouraged us to focus on preparation in 2019 with only a third (34 per cent) of people saying they'll take extra steps this year. Although more than a quarter (27 per cent) check the weather up to ten times a week, the same small percentage spend time preparing their winter wardrobe (27 per cent) and getting their house ready (22 per cent).

When it comes to more specific preparations, less than half ensure their car is ready for winter weather (39%), just a third get a flu jab (33 per cent), 29 per cent check their pipes and only 11 per cent check their flood risk.

Winter preparation is not just about your home, but also your community, with 23 per cent of Brits saying that they would check on an elderly or vulnerable neighbour in the event of a severe weather warning.

Madeleine Alessandri - Deputy National Security Advisor, Cabinet Office, comments "The Met Office's WeatherReady campaign is a helpful reminder to prepare for the possible effects of severe winter weather.

Whilst our public and emergency services carry out their usual winter preparatory work, all of us can take a few small steps that could make a big difference in adverse conditions. Please take a moment to consider how your home, health and travel may be affected by the winter weather and take action now to prepare".

Will Lang, Head of Civil Contingencies at The Met Office, says "Changeable weather is a fact of life throughout the winter months as the recent heavy rainfall and flooding has shown us.

As we approach winter, it is important to know where you can access expert advice and guidance to help you prepare for the potential impacts of severe weather. Taking a small amount of time to prepare now can make a big difference in keeping family, friends and neighbours, as well as property and businesses safe throughout the months ahead."

WEATHER READY Checklist

1. Get your flu jab ☐

Flu can have a major impact on vulnerable people and you may be entitled to your vaccination free of charge.

2. Check your vehicle is winter ready ☐

Top up anti-freeze screen wash, check your tyres and think about a winter kit for your car.

3. Make a 'plan B' for commuting and childcare ☐

Consider alternative commuting plans for severe weather, and alternative childcare plans in case of school or nursery closures.

4. Check your heating ☐

Cold weather can be a risk to your health, particularly if you are over 65 or have health conditions. Your home should be heated to at least 18 °C.

5. How will you access information? ☐

Consider how you would access vital information if a storm takes out power and phone lines. Save key documents and information in a safe place and consider a battery-powered charger.

6. Think about what may be impacted by strong winds or flooding ☐

Around the home there may be guttering, pipes, roof tiles/slates, garden items and important items stored on the ground floor which could be at risk from severe weather. Make some checks and maintenance, and consider moving items.

7. Plumbing checks can save your money ☐

Check your pipes are insulated and know where your stop tap is.

8. Have some basic supplies and a grab bag ready ☐

Make sure you have some basic supplies such as bottled water, medicines, torch, radio and batteries in a 'grab bag'. This will help if you have to leave home quickly or your power or water are disrupted.

9. Think of your neighbours ☐

Share this checklist with your neighbours, and see if they have any other tips. You can also tell them if you can help in severe weather.

10. Think of your community ☐

There are lots of things you could do to help your community, particularly if severe weather hits. Contact your local resilience forum for more information.

www.metoffice.gov.uk/WeatherReady

Are your friends and neighbours Weather Ready? Share this checklist and see if you can help them to prepare #WeatherReady

With winter fast approaching, you don't need to freeze up at the thought of preparation: The Met Office reveals some top tips to help everyone get ready this winter:

Prepare a winter kit for your car

Pack a few essential items in your car's boot to make sure you are ready in case you get stuck in unexpectedly cold weather. Recommended items to include are an ice scraper and de-icer, torch, in car phone charger, warm clothes and blankets, high visibility clothing, jump leads and supplies.

Vehicle checks before beginning your journey

The winter months see more breakdowns due to the cold. Before you set off, make sure that you pay attention to: oil and coolant, battery, fuel, wiper blades and screen wash, fan belt, lights, tyres, jack, wheel brace and spare wheel, warning lights, and spare keys.

Carry out essential property checks

Check your roof for any loose slates or tiles, clear your guttering and make sure that all water pipes and tanks are insulated to help protect from freezing and help to insulate your hot water system. Checking the flood risk of your property is also important (please find more direct information on how to check and what to do if your home is at risk of flooding [here](#) and sign up for [free flood warnings](#)).

Keep your home warm

Heat your home to at least 18 degrees Celsius is important. Properly insulating your home not only keeps you warm and healthy but can also help keep your heating costs down.

Check on others

Older neighbours and relatives are more at risk from the cold, so make sure you check in on them in severe weather, ensuring they have plenty of food and medicine, so they don't have to go out in really bad weather.

For more information and advice on how to prepare, check out our [WeatherReady](#) pages